511 Way of life. According To all descriptions of the living conditions of the Vepsians at the end of the czarist rule and the beginning of the Bolshevik reign, their life seems to be quite primitive. Kettunen, upon his first arrival at Vepse in 1917, was overcome by the charm of this primitiveness (p. 41): "I at once felt as though I had arrived at the primitive Balto-Finnic imaginary land, where I had sometimes [493] wished to be, at least for a while." There are villages to which one cannot go by carriage in summer, but only on foot; for carrying loads a 511 kind of sleigh (purilazh) is used. Quite a num- 342 ber of houses are without chimneys, so that the smoke can only escape by the doors and windows. Some of the huts are not even rain-proof; Kettunen tells that in a Vepsian house in Pjatina (Russian: Pyatino) they all were bothered by rain at night. There are no beds in the houses, and the people sleep on benches attached to the walls, or on the oven, or even on the floor. During the cold winters the Vepsians, following the Russian model, used to bring young animals into the room. Kettunen sometimes had to share his working room not only with other people but also with calves and poultry.

[343] The bathhouse is rather a rarity in 515 Vepse. Instead, the people used to bathe in the oven of the dwelling house. When the oven is heated, and some straw spread on its floor, one member of the family carefully crawls into it, feet first, so as not to touch the hot mouth of the oven. The oven is spacious enough for one person to sit. After he is in, he closes